



7 VENDOR MANAGEMENT

Effective: 6/1/96

7.2 Vendor Authorization Process: Site Visit

POLICY: If the State WIC Vendor Unit determines that a grocery store or pharmacy meets the history, stock, and price requirements, a site visit must be made by WIC program staff. A site visit is required for all grocery stores and pharmacies which have not previously been authorized as WIC vendors. A site visit may also be required for previously-authorized applicants if the State WIC Vendor Unit or local project determines that a site visit is necessary for reasons which may include, but are not limited to, suspension or termination of the stores's authorization during the most recent contract period, possible program offenses on the part of the applicant, or some reason to suspect that information on the application may be false.

PROCEDURE:

A. PURPOSE OF THE SITE

The purpose of the site visit is to verify and document the information submitted on the vendor's application materials and the conditions of the store at the time of the visit.

B. CONDUCTING THE SITE VISIT

If vendors meet the conditions of eligibility and the application materials are complete, the State WIC Vendor Unit forwards the vendor's application materials to the local WIC Project with instructions to conduct a site visit. See Policy 7.1.D. Vendor Authorization Process: Application.

1. A Site Visit Form (DOH 4324), that provides instructions for conducting the site visit, is included with the vendor's application materials sent to the local WIC Project by the State WIC Vendor Unit. See Attachments.
2. If WIC Project staff attempt to conduct the site visit during normal working hours and the store is not open, WIC Project staff will make written notation on the site visit form of the following information:
 - a) the date of the attempted site visit
 - b) the time of day of the visit
 - c) the fact that no sign was posted, indicating the time or date that store personnel would be returning to re-open



3. When documentation is received indicating that a store was not open at the time of the attempted site visit during normal working hours, the State WIC Vendor Unit will deny the authorization.
4. Documentation on the Site Visit Form should be completed thoroughly and accurately, since it will be included as evidence at an administrative hearing, if the store is denied authorization based on the findings of the site visit and that denial decision is appealed.
5. Information should be documented for conditions at the time of the visit. If, for example, WIC items are not priced, that should be documented on the Site Visit Form; the store should not be provided an opportunity to correct the situation on the day of the visit.
6. To determine if the store has violated any applicable federal, state and local health protection laws, document any observed violations such as rodent droppings on the floor, unclean odors, meats or other foods that appear old. The State WIC Vendor Unit will determine if further reporting to appropriate health inspection agencies is needed.

C. APPROVED SITE VISIT

The findings of the site visit are reviewed by the State WIC Vendor Unit and, if the store is found acceptable, an authorization packet is sent to the local WIC Project.

D. INADEQUATE SITE VISIT

1. The site visit is considered inadequate and authorization denied if:
 - a) the grocery store or pharmacy does not have foods meeting the minimum stock requirement on shelves or in coolers in the customer area;
 - b) prices are neither marked on food containers nor otherwise posted in the immediate area where the foods are kept in the customer area of the store;
 - c) prices are substantially different from those listed on the application;
 - d) the store is in violation of applicable federal state and local health protection laws and ordinances;
 - e) authorized foods are older than the expiration date indicated on the package or are otherwise not fresh; or
 - f) it is determined that the grocery store or pharmacy provided false information on the application.



Vendor Management

2. If a store is denied authorization based on the results of the site visit, the State WIC Vendor Unit will notify the applicant, in writing, of the denial decision, the reason(s) for the denial, the process for appealing the decision, and their right to submit another application and have another site visit. A copy of the notice is also sent to the local WIC Project.

ATTACHMENTS

Site Visit Form (DOH 4324)